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The Book of Major Sins

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Muhammad ibn Sulayman at-Tamimi

Translated by

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List of Contents

TRANSLITERATION CHART.....	10
SYMBOLS DIRECTORY.....	12
FOREWORD.....	13
THE MAJOR SINS.....	15
The greatest of the major sins.....	16
The major sins of the heart.....	16
Mentioning of pride.....	16
Vanity.....	18
Hypocrisy and ostentation.....	19
Exultation.....	21
Despair of Allah's mercy and security from the plan of Allah.....	21
Being suspicious of Allah.....	23
Pride and mischief.....	24
Enmity and hatred.....	25
Immorality (Obscenity).....	25
Loving Allah's enemies.....	26
Hardness of hearts.....	27
Tenderness of hearts.....	29
The major sins of the tongue: Evils of the tongue.....	30
Talking too much.....	32
Artificiality and ranting.....	33
Prolonged disputes.....	34

People fear for one's evil tongue.....	35
Immorality and obscenity.....	35
Falsehood and lying.....	36
Breaking one's covenant.....	38
Saying what you really do not know.....	38
Flattery and false praise.....	41
Lies eradicate blessings.....	42
Lies about dreams.....	42
Diseases of the heart and matters which deaden the heart.....	43
Satisfaction with disobedience.....	45
Desiring and craving.....	46
Doubting in faith.....	47
Discontentment.....	48
Anxiety.....	49
Doubt.....	50
Concealing acts.....	51
Greed for property and status.....	51
Impatience and cowardice.....	52
Stinginess.....	52
The punishment of miserliness.....	53
Hating the righteous people.....	54
Envy.....	55
Evil thought about Muslims.....	55
Telling lies against Allah and His Messenger.....	56
Speaking about Allah without knowledge.....	56
False testimony.....	57

Slandering chaste believing women.....	59
The two-faced person.....	60
Calumny.....	60
To revile, serious slander.....	61
Cursing.....	62
Disclosing secrets.....	63
Cursing a Muslim.....	63
Saying bad about the deceased.....	64
A man may curse his parents!.....	64
Non-Islamic call prohibited.....	65
Intercession in prescribed punishments.....	65
Giving help in a false dispute.....	66
Speak good, or keep silent.....	67
Avoid speech during civil strife.....	67
The saying, "People have perished".....	68
Boasting.....	68
Reviling other's race.....	69
Claiming false ancestry.....	69
Denying lineage.....	70
False claims and transgressing in quarrels.....	70
Claiming knowledge with pride.....	71
Being ungrateful.....	72
Slandering the pious and ridiculing the poor.....	72
Ridicule.....	73
Frightening a Muslim.....	75
Boasting of receiving what has not been given.....	75
Talking about disobedience.....	75

Accusation of adultery.....	76
Calling master to a sinner.....	76
Swearing by ones honesty.....	76
Swearing by a religion other than Islam.....	76
Backbiting.....	77
Leading the blind astray.....	79
Publicizing immorality.....	79
Bribery.....	80
Presents for men of authority.....	80
Gifts for intercession.....	81
Acting dishonesty.....	82
Obeying the rulers.....	83
Leaving the community.....	84
Killing.....	88
Trials.....	90
Disobedience to parents.....	91
Breaking kinship ties.....	92
Causing harm to a neighbour.....	93
Disrespect to elders.....	95
Making husband angry.....	95
Harming righteous people.....	96
Trust and dishonesty.....	97
Rulership is a trust.....	98
Seeking position.....	99
Deceiving subjects.....	90
Mercy to the subjects.....	100
Avoiding people's needs.....	100

Nepotism.....	101
Tyranny and injustice.....	101
Right judgement.....	102
Trust.....	103
Responsibility.....	104
Kindness to slaves.....	105
Kindness to animals.....	105
Slave's running away.....	106
Wronging a workman.....	106
Woman asking for divorce.....	107
Cuckoldry.....	107
Wronging a woman.....	107
Pointing weapon jokingly.....	107
Partisanship.....	108
Protecting an innovator (A person of heresies).....	109
Oppressing an orphan.....	109
Appropriation of land.....	110
Oppression.....	110
Oppressing properties.....	111
Forsaking the oppressed.....	111
The Muslim brotherhood.....	112
GLOSSARY.....	115

Symbols Directory

(سُبْحَانَكَ يَا مَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ) : *Subhânahu wa Ta'âla* — “The Exalted”

(سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ) : *Şalla-Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* — “Blessings and peace be upon him”

(سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ) : *'Alayhis-Salâm* — “May peace be upon him”

(رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ) : *Raḍia-Allâhu 'Anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him”

(رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْكَ يَا نَبِيَّاتِ اللَّهِ) : *Raḍia-Allâhu 'Anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her”

Foreword

Praise be to Allah the Exalted, the Sustainer of all the Worlds and blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, the last of all the Prophets and Messengers, and on the members of his family, his Companions, and on all those who follow him until the Day of Resurrection.

One of the major tribulations of human existence are the consequences of committing sins or releasing evil into the world. According to the moral scale of Islam, it is known that, man is imperfect or fallible and prone to committing sins. This is a part of his innate weak nature as a finite creature. However, it is a sin if he has the ways and means to attain relative moral perfection and deliberately chooses not to seek it.

By definition a sin is any evil thought, that is acted upon:

1. deliberately,
2. defying the unequivocal law of Allah, the Exalted,
3. violating the rights of Allah or the rights of man,
4. any deed harmful to the soul or body,
5. any evil deed committed repeatedly, and
6. a deed that is normally avoidable.

In Islam, there are major and minor categories of sins relating against Allah the Exalted, and sins against Allah's creation. All sins against Allah, except one, are forgivable, if the sinner sincerely seeks forgiveness. Allah the Exalted has stated in the Qur'an that, He does not forgive the sin of *Shirk* (polytheism, pantheism, trinity, etc.), but He forgives sins other than this and pardons whom He wills. If the

polytheist or atheist repents and turns to Allah with *Tawh ed* or belief in Allah alone, as his only deity, his sins will be forgiven. Sins against men are forgivable only if the victims pardon the offender or if the proper compensations and/or punishments are applied.

The human being is imperfect, greedy and desirous of more. But committing a sin or making a mistake, as Adam ( ) and Eve did, does not necessarily deaden the human heart, prevent spiritual reform or stop moral growth. On the contrary, the human being is capable of knowing where to turn and to whom he should turn for guidance. Much more important is the fact that Allah ( ) is ever prepared to respond to the sincere calls of those who seek His aid.

He is the All-Compassionate and All-Merciful and His forgiveness is encompassing and His Mercy is All-Inclusive:

﴿... رَبَّنَا ثَبِّلْنَا مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ [سورة البقرة: ١٢٧]

﴿... Our Lord! Accept [our worship] from us, for you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 127)

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن نَّسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ [سورة البقرة: ٢٨٦]

﴿... Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error. Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that, which you did lay on those before us, a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector, grant us victory over the disbelievers.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 286)

The Major Sins

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah ( ) says:

﴿إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا نُهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ...﴾ [سورة النساء: ٣١]

[سورة النساء: ٣١]

﴿If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your evil deeds...﴾ (Qur'an 4: 31)

Allah ( ) says:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَحْتَبِرُونَ كَثِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَحِشِ إِلَّا أَلَمٌ...﴾ [سورة النجم: ٣٢]

﴿Those who avoid the major sins and abominations, save the unwilling offences...﴾ (Qur'an 53: 32)

Ibn Jareer reported Ibn 'Abb s ( ) as saying: «Allah has sealed each of the major sins with Hell-fire, curse, wrath/or punishment.»

He further reported Ibn 'Abb s ( ) as saying: «Major sins reach seven hundred, very akin to the seven major. However repentance after a major sin brings it to naught and a minor sin turns into major when one is persistent in doing it.»

'Abdur-Razz q reported Ibn 'Abb s ( ) as saying: «Major sins reach to seventy very closer to the seven.»¹

¹ Tafseer at-Tabari, 4/44, hadith nos. 9208-9210.

the Low Places (i.e. in Hell).»⁷

Ibn 'Umar reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «*Avoid pride, for a man may be proud owing to a cloak he puts on.*»⁸

Vanity

Allah (ﷻ) says:

[سورة المعارج: ٢٧]

﴿وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ﴾

«And those who are fearful of the punishment of their Lord.»

(Qur'an 70: 27)

It is narrated that Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) said: "Destruction consists in two things, despair and vanity." And Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man praised another man greatly in front of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet said to him: «*Woe to you! You have cut off your companion's neck...*» and repeated it many times and then added, «*One of you who cannot help expressing praise for his brother should say, 'I think that he is so-and-so — in case he (really) found him such — and Allah knows the truth, and I do not confirm anybody's good conduct before Allah.'*»⁹

Hārith ibn Mu'āwiyah related that he told 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with them): «*People used to entice me to tell them stories,*» to which he replied, «*I am afraid that when you tell them stories you may consider yourself great amongst them: and when you do that often, they may consider that you are in the star*

⁷ Aḥmad and Ibn Ḥibbān graded it as authentic.

⁸ Ṭabarani, *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, its narrators are trustworthy.

⁹ Bukhari and Muslim.

constellation above them! Thus Allah, will put you down under their feet on the Day of Resurrection as much as that.»¹⁰

Anas (رضي الله عنه) related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «*If you had not sinned I would have feared for you what is more serious than vanity.*»¹¹

Hypocrisy and ostentation

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

[سورة الكهف: ١١٠]

«... Whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.»

(Qur'an 18: 110)

Jundub ibn 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «*He who lets the people hear of his good deeds intentionally to win their praise Allah will let the people know his real intention (on the Day of Resurrection): and he who does good things in public to show off and win the praise of the people Allah will disclose his real intention (and humiliate him).*»¹²

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: «*Actions are to be judged only by intentions, and a man would have only what he intended.*»¹³

¹⁰ Aḥmad with a good chain of narrators.

¹¹ Bayhaqi in *Ithāf as-Sāda al-Muttaqeen*.

¹² Bukhari and Muslim.

¹³ Ibid.

Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: «*The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe, and the Muhâjir (emigrant) is he who abandons what Allah has prohibited.*»²⁷

The major sins of the tongue: Evils of the tongue

Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾
[سورة الفرقان: ٦٣]

«The [faithful] slaves of the Beneficent [Allah] are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them [harshly] they answer: Peace.» (Qur'an 25: 63)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ ...﴾
[سورة القصص: ٥٥]

«And when they hear ill speech — *al-Laghaw*, they turn away from it...» (Qur'an 28: 55)

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾
[سورة ق: ١٨]

«Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher by him ready [to record it].» (Qur'an 50: 18)

²⁷ Bukhari and Muslim.

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «*He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good, or keep silent.*»²⁸

Sahl ibn Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: «*Whoever guarantees (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw bones (i.e. mouth and tongue) and what is between his two legs, (i.e. his private parts) I stand guarantee for him Paradise.*»²⁹

Sufiyân ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) related that he asked: «*O' Allah's Messenger, what is the thing you fear most for me?*» The Prophet took hold of his own tongue and replied, «*Restrain this.*»³⁰

Mu'âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) reported, that he asked: «*O' Messenger of Allah! Shall we really be punished for what we talk about?*» to which he replied, «*I am surprised Mu'âdh! Will anything but the harvest of their tongues overthrow men in Hell on their faces,*» — or he said, «*on their nostrils?*»³¹

Abu Sa'eed (رضي الله عنه) narrated Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: «*When a man gets up in the morning all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue and say, 'Fear Allah for our sake, for we are dependent on you, if you are straight we are straight, but if you are deviated we are deviated.'*»³²

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «*A man speaks a word without considering it of any importance, yet for it he will sink down into Hell further than the distance between the*

²⁸ Bukhari and Muslim.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Tirmidhi and he graded it as *hasan* and authentic.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Leaving the community

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
تُولَهُ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾ [سورة النساء: ١١٥]

«If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, we shall leave him on the path he has chosen and land him in Hell — what an evil refuge.» (Qur'an 4: 115)

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا...﴾ [سورة آل عمران: ١٠٣]

«And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided...» (Qur'an 3: 103)

Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «*Whoever disapproves of something done by his (Muslim) ruler, then he should be patient, for whoever disobeys Muslim ruler even for a span, will die as those who died in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance.*»¹⁷⁰

Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «*There will be leaders after me who will follow neither my guidance nor my Sunnah, among whom will arise men whose hearts will be the hearts of devils in human bodies.*» Hudhayfah asked, «*O' Allah's Messenger! How should I act if I reach that time?*» The Prophet replied, «*Hear and obey the ruler, even if your back is beaten and your property is taken still hear and obey.*»¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Bukhari and Muslim.

¹⁷¹ Muslim.

'Arfaja al-Ashja'ee (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: «*When you are holding to one single man as your leader, you should kill who seeks to undermine your solidarity or disrupt your unity.*»¹⁷²

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً...﴾ [سورة الأنفال: ٢٥]

«And fear a trial which affects not in particular [only] those of you who do wrong...» (Qur'an 8: 25)

Allah the All-Compassionate, in another Soorah says:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْسِكُمْ
شَيْعًا...﴾ [سورة الأنعام: ٦٥]

«Say, 'He has power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife...» (Qur'an 6: 65)

Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey and they stopped at a place. An announcer of Allah's Messenger announced that the people should gather together for prayer. So we gathered around Allah's Messenger and he said: «*It was the duty of every Prophet before me to guide his people to what he knew was good for them and warn them against what he knew was bad for them but this Ummah (i.e. Muslims) of yours has its days of peace first and then it will be afflicted with trials and things disagreeable to you, in the last phase of its existence. There will be tremendous trials one after the other, each making the previous one*

¹⁷² Muslim, (Eng. trans.), p. 1032, hadith no. 4567.